

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MCT-01 HA-05 AID-05 CCO-00
FBOE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSC-05 SP-02
OC-06 OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 CA-01 A-01 SCS-06
OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 /098 W
-----072086 101250Z /20

O P 101130Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8632
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3839

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION: JULY 10, 1200 HOURS LOCAL

1. SUMMARY. THE TENSE CEASE-FIRE STILL GENERALLY HOLDS.
SARKIS RESIGNATION REMAINS "FROZEN." THE SYRIAN MINISTER OF
INFORMATION REPORTEDLY WARNED THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA TO PLACE
THEMSELVES UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF PRESIDENT SARKIS OR BE
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"DESTROYED." CAMILLE CHAMOUN REPLIED BY SAYING THAT "WE WILL
RESIST IF NECESSARY UNTIL THE LAST MAN." THE ISRAELIS HAVE
REPORTEDLY DELIVERED ARMS BY SHIP TO JUNAYAH AREA. THE KUWAITI
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS VISITED BEIRUT. TWO NORWEGIAN
SOLDIERS WERE REPORTEDLY WOUNDED IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. END
SUMMARY.

2. CEASE-FIRE STILL HOLDS. THE TENSE CEASE-FIRE STILL HOLDS, ALTHOUGH SPORADIC SMALL ARMS FIRE, SNIPING AND OCCASIONAL SHELLING CONTINUE. BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO REINFORCE THEMSELVES WITH ARMS AND AMMUNITION, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE DATT SOURCES. ON JULY 6 SEVERAL TRANSPORT PLANES CARRYING MILITARY SUPPLIES LANDED AT HAMAT AIRFIELD, SAME SOURCES REPORTED. MORE CIVILIANS FLED BEIRUT NORTH TO THE MOUNTAINS ON JULY 9, ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES, THUS EASING SOMEWHAT FOOD AND OTHER CIVILIAN SUPPLY PROBLEMS. EMBASSY OFFICERS TRANSITING EAST BEIRUT AREA ON JULY 9 OBSERVED THAT IT SEEMED TO BE A GHOST TOWN, WITH VIRTUALLY NO CARS OR PEOPLE ON THE STREETS AND APARTMENT HOUSES SEEMINGLY ABANDONED.

3. SARKIS RESIGNATION STILL FROZEN. PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL HOSS TOLD THE PRESS ON JULY 9 THAT "THERE IS NOTHING NEW TO REPORT AND THE ATTITUDE OF PRESIDENT SARKIS REMAINED UNCHANGED." POLITICAL PERSONALITIES CONTINUED TO STREAM INTO THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE ON JULY 9 ASKING HIM NOT TO RESIGN, INCLUDING FORMER PRIME MINISTERS RASHID SOLH AND ABDULLAH YAFI AND GREEK ORTHODOX DEPUTY MUNIR ABU FADEL. L'ORIENT LE JOUR REPORTED THAT SARKIS WAS DEMANDING AS A CONDITION FOR REMAINING IN OFFICE "CARTE BLANCHE" FROM ALL LEBANESE POLITICAL FACTIONS, AS WELL AS THE SYRIANS, ON ACTIONS NEEDED TO RESOLVE THE PRESENT CRISIS. KARIM PAKRADOUNI TOLD EMBOFF COMPLETE POLITICAL IMPASSE CONTINUES, AND THAT SARKIS HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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STILL NEITHER RESIGNED NOR WITHDRAWN HIS STATED INTENTION TO DO SO.

4. TOUGH SYRIAN STATEMENT. BEIRUT PRESS ON JULY 10 FRONT-PAGED A BBC INTERVIEW OF THE SYRIAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION, AHMAD ISKANDAR AHMAD, WHO WARNED THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA TO PLACE THEMSELVES "UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF PRESIDENT SARKIS" OR BE "DESTROYED." HE ACCUSED THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS OF WORKING DELIBERATELY TO WEAKEN THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT SARKIS "IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE PARTITION OF LEBANON."

5. CHAMOUN REPLIES.

A. IN AN INTERVIEW ON JULY 9, NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN REPLIED TO ISKANDAR BY CALLING HIS REMARKS "INSANE." CHAMOUN ALSO SAID:

(1) THE RETURN OF PEACE DEPENDED ON THE RETREAT OF THE ADF FROM EAST BEIRUT AND OF ITS SUBMISSION TO THE AUTHORITY OF PRESIDENT SARKIS. "IF THE SYRIANS REFUSE TO DO THIS, IT IS OUR DUTY TO RESIST, AND WE WILL RESIST IF NECESSARY UNTIL THE LAST MAN."

(2) PRESIDENT SARKIS WOULD REMAIN IN OFFICE "FOR THE MOMENT," AND "WE WANT THE PRESIDENT TO STAY, BUT HE MUST SAY PUBLICLY IF HE IS IN COMMAND OR NOT OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE."

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(3) THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA "WERE TRYING TO MAINTAIN THE CEASE-FIRE DESPITE CONTINUAL PROVOCATIONS."

B. ASKED IN ANOTHER INTERVIEW THE SAME DAY IF THE RIGHTIST MILITIA WOULD SUBMIT TO AN ORDER BY THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES TO THE ADF TO OCCUPY POSITIONS IN

EAST BEIRUT, CHAMOUN REPLIED: "WE RESPECT LEBANESE
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AUTHORITY. BUT WE WILL NOT SUBMIT TO ANY AUTHORITY, IF
THAT AUTHORITY IS WRONG. AND SUCH AN ORDER WOULD BE AN
ERROR."

6. ISRAELI ARMS SHIPMENTS. ADF "COMMANDER" LT. COL. SAMI
KHATIB TOLD EMBOFFS TWO OR THREE ISRAELI SHIPS DURING
RECENT NIGHTS HAD DELIVERED LARGE AMOUNTS OF MUNITIONS,
ARTILLERY, ROCKETS AND ANTI-TANK ROCKETS TO PHALANGE
IN JUNAYAH AREA. OTHER SOURCES HAVE ALSO REPORTED RECENT
ISRAELI ARMS SHIPMENTS ARRIVING BY SHIP.

7. KUWAITI MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN BEIRUT. THE
KUWAITI MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SABAH AL AHMED AL
SABAH, HAS ARRIVED IN BEIRUT, AFTER MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT ASSAD IN DAMASCUS, TO OFFER HIS SERVICES TO
HELP SOLVE THE PRESENT CRISIS. HE DELIVERED A MESSAGE
TO PRESIDENT SARKIS FROM THE EMIR OF KUWAIT ON JULY 9.

8. TWO NORWEGIANS WOUNDED. ACCORDING TO AFP, TWO
NORWEGIAN SOLDIERS WERE WOUNDED JULY 6 IN SOUTH LEBANON
DURING A CLASH WITH FEDAYEEN IN SOUTH LEBANON. THE
TWO SOLDIERS WERE REPORTED IN SERIOUS CONDITION.

9. LOCAL EMPLOYEES. THE FIGHTING OF THE LAST WEEK HAS
MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR MANY OF THE EMBASSY'S LOCAL
EMPLOYEES TO GET TO WORK. ABOUT 60 PERCENT REPORTED
FOR WORK ON JULY 10, A SLIGHTLY HIGHER PERCENTAGE THAN
LAST WEEK.
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TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
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